'A Bed of Procrustes': The Aden Protectorate and the Forward Policy 1934-1944.

This article explores attempts by British colonial officials based in Aden to extend systems of political administration to the colony's tribal hinterland during the late interwar and early wartime period. Commencing initially with delicate attempts to recast faltering relations between tribal chiefs and their subjects, the policy would culminate a decade later with the despatch of British military units throughout the furthest extents of the Protectorate in support of a range of direct political agreements with local rulers that would eventually set the conditions for Federation. The intervening years featured a series of little known debates between various officials on how precisely to cement British influence in the tribal areas, and the philosophy of administration to be pursued to that end. These would expose an element of confusion as to which techniques would best satisfy British policy, and reveal a preference on the part of some for the application of methods atypical of those used elsewhere under Colonial Office jurisdiction, and which drew their inspiration instead from systems of control used on India's volatile frontiers.

I: Introduction

The extension of British political influence throughout the Aden Protectorate during the 1950's has been described as atypical in the context of post-war decolonization.[1] Not only did it serve to contradict the general theme of a withdrawal of British power from its colonies and dependencies but it neither adhered to the 'new Imperialism' of the Attlee Government, nor to notions of 'Imperialism by decolonization'.[2] The advance of new responsibilities, the practice of direct interference in the selection and control of local leaders and an adherence to military action in defence of these interests represented a state of affairs that was largely anomalous in the context of Britain's post-war foreign policy.[3] But in reality it was simply the culmination of a process that had begun some 20 years previously; one which had not only heralded a change in the way that the British viewed their commitments and responsibilities in S.W. Arabia at the time but which would also, by extension, establish the roots of Federation status for the Aden Protectorate States in the late 1950s and early 1960s.[4]

The subject of Federation of course is one that has been well covered before now. Its progenitor, on the other hand, the 'forward policy' of the 1930's and 40's,

remains a matter of some mystery in terms of its form and function. For nigh-on a century, from the initial establishment of a British presence in Aden in 1839, relations with the region's tribal and state leaders were conducted at arm's length via obscure and often ill-defined treaty obligations; a perfect example 'masterly inactivity' in action. And although questions might justifiably be asked as to why such a system was allowed to persist for so long, particularly in contrast to healthy levels of activism elsewhere in Empire, more intriguing questions arise when we investigate why it underwent sudden change. What caused British officials, after decades of disinterest, to end their policy of *laissez faire* and extend the hand of active involvement into Aden's wild tribal hinterland? What form did their initiatives take, for what reason, and ultimately to what effect? These questions arise because, as this article will illustrate, the process by which the Aden government gradually pushed its administrative footprint into the Protectorate was anything but clear-cut or indeed properly thought out. The interplay of various concerns and ideologies on the part of British officials in Aden and London, as well as the inherent intricacies of the region's political landscape, resulted in an uneven amalgam of techniques, ideas and philosophies contorted in turn to accommodate the complex nature of S.W. Arabia's tribal society. Conceptual tensions caused significant disagreements among those responsible for shaping British policy, resulting in the implementation of techniques that were not necessarily best suited to achieving the ends envisaged, and which simultaneously exposed the tendency for some to actively cut against the grain of more progressive thinking at the time.

This article therefore seeks to clarify a number of specific issues. Why did Sir Bernard Reilly, Chief Commissioner of Aden, suddenly decide in 1934 to push British influence into the *terra incognita* of Southern Arabia? Why did his political masters in Whitehall sanction such a move? Who precisely was responsible for shaping British policy on the ground and in what way? And lastly, why did S.W. Arabia, and the

Protectorate in particular, suddenly become such a competing hotbed of ideas as to what form the chosen methods of tribal administration should take? This last question is of particular interest because it draws attention to an individual closely associated with the development of British political administration in the region during this period; Sir Harold Ingrams of the Colonial Office. Ingrams will forever be remembered for his association with the Hadramawt - a large expanse of territory to the east of Aden's tribal hinterland - and in particular for the so-called 'Ingrams Peace' of 1937 by which it would be largely pacified. But Ingrams was also, in his capacity as a member of the Aden administration, involved in a concerted attempt to shape the nature and direction of British administrative techniques in the narrow confines of the Protectorate itself. In doing so he would reveal a preference for systems entirely at odds with those favoured by Colonial Office at the time, and which instead mimicked the systems used by the Government of India's political officers on the distant N.W. Frontier. Indeed, it would be Ingrams who would seek the wholesale transplant of the Indian 'method' of political administration to the Aden Protectorate.

By addressing these issues, and the outstanding questions that arise as a consequence, this article will lend clarity to the actions undertaken during this particular period of British colonial administration in S.W. Arabia. It will add a degree of context to post war events, certainly. It will also add a further dimension to our understanding of the influence of Sir Harold Ingrams on the course of events during this period. But it will also expose shortcomings in the way that British officials approached the admittedly complex issue of tribal administration in the region, and the way in which their notions of how such matters were utilised elsewhere in Empire would lead onward to a series of confused policy debates over their application to the Aden Protectorate.

II: The Aden Protectorate and Hadramawt

Any discussion of British policy toward S.W. Arabia during this period raises the prospect of describing a complex set of administrative responsibilities on the part of the British and Indian Governments that underwent frequent changes over time. As such a broader overview is required. From the initial British presence in 1839 Aden (and later the Protectorate, as British officials explored their surroundings) sat under the supervision of the Bombay Legislative Assembly. But by World War I matters had evolved to the extent that the Resident there now looked towards London rather than India, reporting simultaneously to the India Office, the Foreign Office and the War Office. This multi-layered jurisdiction caused considerable confusion and it was finally decided in 1927 to split responsibilities. Aden was to report to the India Office and the Protectorate became the responsibility of the Colonial Office. In 1932 the former became a Chief Commissioner's Province reporting directly to the Government of India, while on 1 April 1937 yet another change was enforced and it found itself officially separated from the control of the Government of India, becoming instead a Crown Colony under the responsibility of the Colonial Office. The Protectorate meanwhile, having remained under Colonial Office control since 1927, would undergo its own minor administrative evolution in in 1940 when it would be expanded and divided into the so-called Western and Eastern Aden Protectorates.[5]

This brief historical outline gives some idea of the complexity of British arrangements in the region. It also gives a clue as to the sometimes rather ambivalent way in which distant policymakers conceptualised the relationship between Aden and its surrounding tribal territories. Unsurprising really, as that relationship was largely unspoken, unwritten and hidden from view, known only to those intimately concerned with managing that relationship. From the capture of Aden port in 1839 successive Aden administrations, in the person of the Resident, had gradually established a series of informal relationships with the leaders of those tribes in closest proximity to British

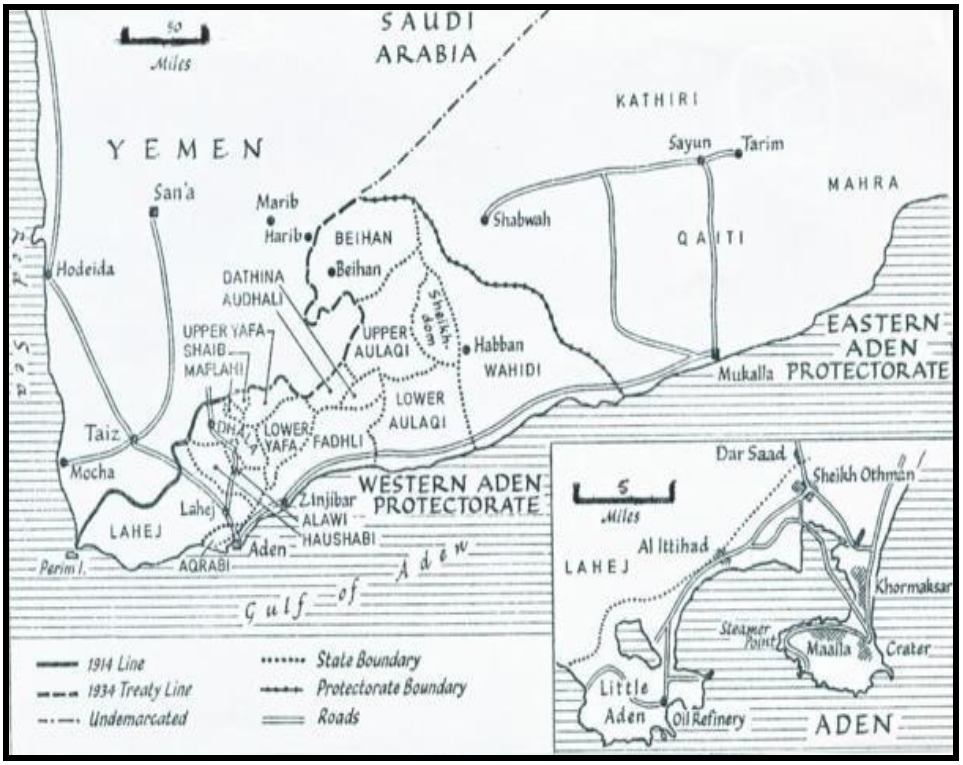
territory.[6] This was done with the intention of building a protective buffer between Aden and Ottoman controlled Yemen. Ultimately these informal agreements were considered insufficient to withstand the pressure that might potentially be applied by rival powers and so from the 1880s mutual defence treaties were signed with the nine tribal territories - the 'cantons' - of what came to be termed the Aden Protectorate, a relationship underpinned by the ready supply of weapons, ammunition and subsidies to respective tribal leaders.[7] Post World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire the Yemen's leader, the Imam Yahia of Sanaa, persisted with a series of territorial claims to both Aden and the Protectorate, mounting armed offensives into the latter. As a consequence, Aden's relationship with its tribal hinterland continued in the traditional fashion.

Despite the myriad changes in departmental jurisdiction in the preceding decades, by the mid 1930's the British concept of the Protectorate was well understood: a geographic and political carapace surrounding the colony of Aden, its various tribal leaders managed at distance by a range of financial and material inducements. Lying under the jurisdiction of the Colonial Office, and defended by the Royal Air Force, it was to all intents and purposes part of Britain's formal Middle East Empire. The same clarity did not apply to the Hadramawt, however. Despite being a geographic (and ultimately administrative) extension of the Protectorate, it sat very much outside the orbit of formal British authority in southern Arabia.[8] Political relations did exist, but they were tenuous, to say the least. Collaboration between the Aden administration and dominant Hadrami polities had been on-going since the late 19th century when British officials had concluded a series of anti-slavery treaties with powerful Hadrami sultans.[9] The subsequent threat posed by Ottoman domination of the Arabian Peninsula had then led British officials to declare their interest in a civil war underway between the Sultanic states of Qui'ait and Kathir. The dominant and ultimately victorious Qu'aiti

confederation was chosen as the primary agent of British influence.[10] For the next five decades Qai'ait remained the primary state actor in the Hadramawt, adopting a fundamentally pro-British position albeit in the form of a relationship that that brooked no physical interference on the part of British officials.

By 1933 therefore British political administration across S.W. Arabia varied significantly in its degrees of formality. The Government of India exercised full control in Aden itself, while the surrounding Protectorate and its tribes operated under a system of formal rule, albeit entirely *laissez faire* in nature, under the authority of the Colonial Office. Meanwhile there existed a thoroughly fragile and utterly informal degree of influence over certain parts of the Hadramawt, exercised in theory by officials in Aden as and when required.[11]

Fig 1: Aden Colony, the Protectorate and Hadramawt (East Aden Protectorate)



III: Sir Bernard Reilly and the first forward policy 1934-1938

What was perhaps most curious about these varying arrangements was not their uneven nature, for the Empire and its environs was replete with such *ad hoc* arrangements. Rather it was the fact that outside the narrow confines of Aden itself, British officials *in situ* conducted diplomatic relations with the surrounding Protectorate by way of a system of remote control unchanged since the 1870's. Unlike in India or colonial territories in Malaya and Africa there existed no established system through which British officials could actively and personally promote their influence within Aden's tribal hinterland.[12] Local agents were used to facilitate relations with tribal leaders, while a single officer acted as a roving ambassador on the Aden Resident's behalf to the Sultanate of Lahej, the only recognizable State-like political formation within the Protectorate.[13] But the vast bulk of the Protectorate - some 50,000 sq. m of territory – witnessed little or no physical or visible presence on the part of British officials.[14] In other words the vast extent of tribal territory surrounding Aden Colony - territory open to the intrigues of warring tribes, neighbouring powers or rival actors - sat almost entirely beyond the oversight of the administration there.

Although an acceptable state of affairs to previous incumbents Sir Bernard Reilly, appointed Resident in March 1931 before administrative changes the following year resulted in his elevation to Chief Commissioner, expressed growing concerns.[15] Rising levels of internecine violence in Aden's hinterland had begun to disrupt the landward trade routes to and from the Colony. Additionally, it promised to facilitate the Imam of Sanaa's quest for influence in the region and, even more importantly, threatened to expose the British Government to accusations that its influence over the Protectorate tribes rested upon little more than a system of bribing a few select tribal leaders, with little attention paid to the wellbeing of their subjects.

Reilly exercised his own judgement as to the cause of the increasing violence in the Protectorate, claiming to have identified a gradual but growing divorce between tribal

leaders and the theoretically subordinate but hugely powerful tribesmen class. The latter was possibly the most influential strata of many within Protectorate society and the gradual dissolution of their relationship with those through whom the British conducted their (admittedly very limited) political relations was a concern to Reilly.[16] Indeed, the matter was of such concern that he proposed a solution; the creation of Government-sponsored tribal militias which would work to recast and strengthen the tribal patron-client relationship and reinforce the authority of the Chiefs.[17] By cementing the relationship between rulers and their tribesmen, British administrators might be able to encourage the necessary peace and stability that would satisfy a range of concerns, in the process opening up avenues for their own influence throughout the region.[18]

Reilly's suggestion may have appeared insightful, but far from it. It simply mimicked one of the systems already employed by Indian Political Service (IPS) tribal administrators on the North-West Frontier. That this was the case should be of no great surprise. The IPS and its predecessors had long cast their shadow over Britain's Arabian and Gulf dependencies.[19] Indeed, their historic dealings with local rulers throughout the Peninsular had effectively set the precedent for existing systems of diplomatic representation there.[20] Indeed, Reilly himself had been a long-serving member of the IPS, having joined its predecessor, the Foreign and Political Department, in 1908. But perhaps most significantly with respect to his musings on tribal authority, he was served by Major Morice Challanor (M.C.) Lake. Although employed as diplomatic representative to the Sultan of Lahej, Lake had recently served on the North-West Frontier of India and it was he who, shortly after his return to Arabia from the troublesome Waziristan agency in 1927, had formed the Aden Protectorate Levies (APL). Created ostensibly to protect RAF landing grounds this small force of tribesmen had, under Lake's tutelage, become a broader instrument of influence designed to illustrate the capacity for inter-tribal unity.

Although the APL was too distant from tribal politics and too 'military' to suit his purposes, the concept of using a force of tribesmen as an instrument of influence struck a chord with Reilly. In particular it emphasised suggested that the engineering of meaningful change within the Protectorate required a specifically tribal focus. This in turn should be supported by a network of officers overseeing the formation and training of suitable units, presenting the public face of British authority and ultimately endeavouring to build relations with selected rulers. It would essentially mean the creation of a 'political' system of administration designed to push forward into the Protectorate.[21]

Regardless of design, the chief constraint acting upon Reilly at this stage lay not in technicalities but the lack of broader consensus as to the need for a change in policy. The Colonial Office (CO), under whose responsibility the Protectorate lay, would be unlikely to accept his concerns over the degradation of tribal government as a legitimate cause for what was in effect the implementation of a new forward policy. Opportunity arose however in the form of an unexpected but timely diplomatic development. A long standing offensive by the Foreign Office (FO) to resolve points of tension between Britain and Yemen relating to the northern boundary of the Protectorate had resulted in a series of discussions in Sana'a in December 1933 and in which Reilly was intimately involved.[22] During negotiations, an unofficial request had been made by the Imam that the travellers' routes between Aden and Yemen, then under constant attack by wayward tribal elements, be protected by the British. Despite having no assurances from London in this respect, Reilly assured him that his request would be satisfied.[23] His actions in this respect doubtless stemmed from the realisation that if the travelling routes were to be kept safe then security had to be actively enhanced; the perfect opportunity to implement his proposed measures. The diplomatic dimension ensured that Colonial Office opposition to Reilly's actions was dampened in the face of the Foreign Office's strong

desire to resolve the now long running and increasingly expensive Anglo-Yemeni dispute, while the marginal financial implications of the suggested change in policy further encouraged accommodation.[24] Thus in early 1935, with the necessary higher political endorsement to hand, Reilly began to institute his 'Tribal Guards' scheme; groups of 50-100 tribesmen comprising each major Chief's personal retinue, recruited and paid to act both as a security force and a visible manifestation of Chiefly authority. Ultimately, Reilly hoped, the Guards would reinforce the bonds between the two most important elements of Protectorate society and lead to the gradual spread of security and therefore peace.

Somewhat predictably a burgeoning 'political' cadre quickly emerged to support and add momentum to the process. Lake had been withdrawn from day-to-day duties in the Protectorate in order to assume a more senior role within the Aden administration and so responsibility for developing the scheme fell to Captain Robert Hamilton (later Lord Belhaven) of the APL, who was appointed Political Officer for the 'Western' Protectorate.[25] His task was to oversee the implementation of the Tribal Guards scheme in those areas most proximate to the routes connecting Aden Colony to Sana'a. From there he was to gradually roll out the experiment across the remaining tribal areas. Within 18 months the scheme had been extended to the Haushabi, Fahdli and Amiri tribes with plans to extend it to Abiyan and Subeihi country, guided by a gradually enlarged network of political officers.

Almost inevitably the 'political' concept expanded even further. With the Tribal Guards intended to represent the authority of the Chiefs, Reilly suggested the creation of an equivalent tribal force acting this time in the interests of the Aden administration; an internal security force under direct political control.[26] Thus were born the 'Government Guards', a loose collection of armed tribesmen employed as personal representatives of each political officer in the Protectorate. Although directly mirroring yet another N.W.

Frontier initiative - the *Khassadar* tribal police in this instance - Reilly's new initiative was indicative of a more revealing similarity to the experience of Indian administrators; that systems of control, when applied to volatile frontiers, often generated their own inexorable momentum in terms of the creation of new formations and the adoption of associated responsibilities. [27]

That momentum drew Reilly's attention further eastward. From the beginning of his appointment as Resident, he had perceived the Hadramawt as suffering a similar malaise to the Protectorate. A vast, largely unknown and - despite the presence of two state-like formations in the shape of the Kathiri and Quaiy'ti sultanates - seemingly ungoverned space beset by continual low-level violence, it appeared to ask familiar questions of existing policy.[28] As early as 1932 he had pressed for a change in approach and although rebuffed had continued to keep abreast of the situation courtesy of intelligence gleaned from his own brief visit in early 1934 and his despatch there later that same year of a newly arrived Colonial Service subordinate, Harold Ingrams.[29] The latter soon shared Reilly's views as to the shortcomings of existing policy and, motivated by a personal regard for Hadrami's that had flourished during prior service in Zanzibar, had provided a steady stream of suggestions regarding the changes that might be made.[30] Eventually in August 1935 Reilly sought to persuade the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID) that a change in direction with respect to the Hadramawt was also required.[31] Travelling to London that summer he presented a series of suggestions for future policy centred upon the attempted implementation of a British sponsored Kathiri - Quai'ity truce.

Although such a course of action appeared relatively anodyne and primarily diplomatic in nature, in reality it envisaged a comprehensive policy of pacification. Similar in spirit to that underway in the Protectorate, Reilly's proposed Hadramawt policy required the use of British trained armed forces to create the necessary conditions

for peace. But important considerations would mollify sceptics. First and foremost, his proposal offered British diplomats and military chiefs the opportunity to pre-empt Italian designs in Southern Arabia. Since the late 1920's Britain had maintained a wary eye upon the growth of Italy's imperial interests in the Red Sea region, and competition between the two countries had been intensifying over time. Using the springboard provided by pre-existing colonial possessions in Eritrea and Italian Somaliland, and shortly to be bolstered by the invasion of Abyssinia, Mussolini's regime had spent the previous decade gradually exerting pressure upon British interests in the Arabian peninsular by virtue of its various intrigues in the region, particularly its cultivation of favourable relations with the Imam, which would culminate with the signing of a treaty of friendship in September 1926.[32] Notwithstanding a subsequent diplomatic agreement on the subject reached with Rome the following year, and designed specifically to address rising concerns at Italian intentions, the Foreign Office and the C.I.D. in particular remained hugely sensitive to the prospect of a rival European power gaining any influence in the Arabian Peninsular.[33] It remained after all a vital link in the Imperial chain of sea, air and land communications between the Mediterranean and India, and onward to other Far Eastern possessions. If the Hadramawt were to remain free of British influence then the door lay ajar for opportunistic diplomacy on the part of a regime that was increasingly leaning away from its historically pro-British stance. For these reasons, Ingrams' proposals played upon a set of sobering geopolitical concerns for some British policymakers. For its part the Colonial office, motivated by a rather different set of priorities, was attracted by the proviso that, once the conflict between the two warring Hadrami States had been resolved, they would each would be directed toward a more productive and mutually beneficial economic relationship by colonial specialists chosen specifically for the task, thus relieving the financial burden upon British structures.[34] And both departments freely acknowledged that whatever the merits or demerits of a forward policy in the

Hadramawt, the moral as well as strategic shortcomings inherent to Britain's position prior to that point dictated that it could no longer maintain influence there on a negative basis.[35]

IV: Systems, Structures and Debates

The 1935 Interdepartmental conference was notable for several reasons. Firstly it marked the point of official acceptance of the need for a change in policy toward the Hadramawt, bringing that region into line with the neighbouring Protectorate. Secondly it illustrated that while fears of Italian activities in that region were certainly a factor in prompting action, there was also a very genuine concern as to the moral shortcomings inherent to existing policy. Lastly, it marked the point at which S.W. Arabia began to witness the introduction of what might be termed the Colonial - as opposed to Indian - 'method' of administration.

Of course, mention of a colonial 'method' begs the question of what exactly that might be. One cannot, for example, describe a series of techniques applicable in a uniform sense to all colonial territories because the Colonial Office oversaw a large number of administrative fiefdoms that varied in their administrative styles and philosophies.[36] However one can discern, particularly in the passing of the 1929 Development Act and the unification of the Colonial Service two years later a broad tendency toward political and economic development. 'Progress' was the watchword of the interwar colonial administrator, a philosophy that stood in contrast to that espoused by his Indian frontier colleague who appeared more interested in the mechanics of control. And these two differing appreciations would come to define the arguments that would unfold over the choices to be taken with regard to political administration in S.W. Arabia over the next half-decade.

Due to its distinctive political condition, the conditionality of Colonial office support for a new forward policy, and the fact that a Colonial office official was the

driving force behind an enhanced British presence, it was only natural that the Hadamawt would be viewed as presenting the perfect opportunity to experiment with the Colonial method. Security would be grown through the application of political and economic reforms - a consideration that did not apply to the neighbouring Protectorate where policy sought to deliver its goals through manipulation and limited engagement. Consequently, the Colonial Office required a particular type of administrative structure for the Hadramawt; a system that satisfied its requirements for 'development' while limiting its exposure in terms of responsibilities. Fortunately, experience elsewhere provided an answer in the form of the Resident Adviser (RA) system then being used in the Unfederated Malay States (UMS). By placing a British official in close contact with the ruler of a native state (and forcing the latter to defer over matters of trade, foreign relations and defence), it provided the necessary influence with respect to those issues of most importance to British officials while at the same time satisfying the demands of *laissez faire* by placing more contentious matters, particularly those to do with religion and culture, firmly in the hands of local government.[37] In other words it provided for the extension of formal authority whilst limiting the liabilities of direct administration.

The suggestion was accepted by the CID in January 1937 and in the established narrative of British policy in S.W. Arabia during this period, marked the point at which Ingrams became indelibly linked with the region. Entering the Hadramawt in the spring of that year and provided with a roving brief to properly determine the state of affairs there prior to any attempted implementation of the new policy, he unilaterally formulated a series of truces among the warring tribes over the spring of 1937. The so-called 'Ingrams' peace' rapidly pacified the hitherto conflict ridden tribal areas of the Hadramawt's hinterland. Its success, underpinned by the crucial support of wealthy Hadrami powerbrokers, won Ingrams tremendous political capital and provided him with the impetus to secure agreement with the Quai'ty Sultanate along the lines

envisaged.[38] It also made him the obvious choice for appointment as 'Resident Adviser to the Sultanate of Mukulla'; the primary British representative to the Hadramawt States.[39] But this appointment would have further significance. His new position would enable him, over time, to provide an additional, and indeed alternative, perspective on the seemingly slow progress of British political administration in the Protectorate.

V: Looking Backwards

While the Hadramawt would see a combination of active politicking and colonial methods rapidly deliver some degree of peace, stability and economic development, little appeared to change in the constantly restless tribal lands to the west.[40] Despite progress in certain areas, five years after the introduction of measures designed to lead to its pacification the Protectorate appeared stubbornly resistant to any attempted manipulation by outside elements. And by late 1941 incidents of violence would actually begin to rise as the Government appeared to lose both visibility and reach in the tribal areas.

Opinion as to why this should be the case was divided. Reilly's replacement as Aden Resident, Sir John Hawthorn-Hall, was drawn to concluding - perhaps not unreasonably - that the difficulties in translating action into results could be laid at the door of straightened wartime circumstances.[41] The Protectorate adhered to the interwar model of air policing as used elsewhere in Empire. The technique was controversial, certainly, attracting opprobrium then and since.[42] There was no doubt in the mind of many that the indiscriminate use of air bombardment was indefensible, but for those on the ground the questions at play were rather more layered. Tribal violence, the potential threat from Yemeni forces, and Aden's general value to British imperial interests demanded a military presence in the region. Airpower was not only hugely economical in comparison to ground forces, but it could more easily traverse the vast distances

required. But perhaps more importantly British administrators on the ground, much like their Indian counterparts on the Frontier, preferred the aircraft to be utilised in support of 'political' activity.[43] It had long been used in such a fashion by the Aden administration, to the extent that during the 1920's much of their intelligence about the interior tribes had been provided by RAF officers.[44] Where the tribes were concerned, aircraft were to be used *in extremis* as a weapon of war and even then only sparingly. Indeed, one of greatest devotees of airpower in the Southern Arabian context was Ingrams, who in his memoirs described the precise calibration of non-lethal force by the Royal Air Force in support of political actions.[45] But of course, non-lethal or otherwise the intention was for airpower to represent, when required, a visible and powerful manifestation of political will.

By 1940, however, significant airpower resources had been diverted to Egypt and East Africa and without recourse to threat of force from the air, the system of control employed hitherto in the Protectorate had begun to unravel. In addition the Aden political cadre had suffered a significant depletion in its strength. Of the individuals employed in political duties in connection to the Protectorate in the early wars years – Reginald Champion, Lake, Robert Hamilton, Charles Sheppard, Basil Seager and Peter Davey – the first two sat in administrative roles in Aden itself and Hamilton was *hors de combat* due to injury and then subsequently to wartime service.[46] Although the remaining officers represented a tripling of the effective political presence in the Protectorate in comparison to five years previously, the vastness of the territory under question imposed a severe handicap upon their activities. While the strength of the political establishment may have increased, its responsibilities and the scope of its activities had swollen to a far greater extent, diminishing its overall effectiveness.

Resources or the lack thereof was only part of the explanation as to why efforts to pacify the Protectorate appeared to be stagnating, however. The primary causes were

more elementary. First and foremost it appeared that British actions suffered from a fundamental lack of understanding about what precisely they were intended to achieve. This was something that Ingrams had already noted, lamenting that, '[W]e are somehow missing the bus…And I am not entirely sure why'.[47] But there were also significant problems with the basic conceptual foundations of British designs within the Protectorate. Responsibility for security and the mounting of punitive actions against violent elements had been largely devolved onto the shoulders of native 'Chiefs', but such a development simply revealed their inherent limitations in this respect. The embryonic forces placed at their disposal for such purposes were too weak to address those instances where the relationship between Chief and tribe had broken down. And for British officers seeking to coerce those Chiefs apparently abrogating their responsibilities towards their subjects, the lack of recourse to punitive bombing was not the fundamental problem in their exercising the necessary authority. Rather it was the absence of any formal advisory-type system that placed their relationship with tribal leaders on a surer, more established footing. Without any legitimate and mutually comprehensible bilateral relationship between the two parties, both appeared to operate in a climate of complete uncertainty.

Of course, wider concerns that the introduction of formal diplomatic agreements would lead to a thinly disguised form of direct rule across the Protectorate had prevented the adoption of such measures. But the subsequent persistence with what was in effect the weakest form of indirect rule obscured a second fundamental problem, and one that Ingrams, and Reilly before him, had failed to detect. For, if indirect rule meant 'rule through the chiefs', then it was becoming increasingly apparent that Protectorate 'chiefs' did not themselves 'rule', at least not in the way that was assumed. As subsequent observers have noted, by 'thinking English' and conceptualising tribal leaders as occupying a position much like that of a Tudor monarch, Reilly *et al* had from the very

beginning laboured under a series of questionable assumptions, thereby leading them onward into a series of mistaken actions. Their determination to visualise tribal authority as stemming from a central figure of authority not only ignored tribal constitution, which rendered hereditary Chiefs elected figures and thus *primus inter pares* among their tribesmen, it fundamentally mistook the traditional nature of political authority in the Protectorate, which centred not on tribe but '*dawla*'.[48] Loosely translated as 'Government', *dawla* was comprised of whichever family, group or individual had managed to achieve ascendency. In other words, political hierarchy was not inherently tied to the tribe; it could be placed in the hands of outsiders associated with a particular locality and might be secured through any number of means such as wealth, influence or barbarity. Neither did *dawla* imply even a minimal level of influence; tribal federations in certain areas of the Protectorate might not recognise the authority of a central figure or family at all. The *dawla's* subjects accepted or rejected its authority as passing interests dictated. If the *dawla* was to possess any degree of authority, then that rested largely upon its ability generate a community of interests between the various classes of Protectorate society, a system that had functioned effectively enough until the sudden and unhindered influx of firearms into the region in the late 19th century. By categorising local rulers according to established concepts of orderly political hierarchies the British had hoped to give meaning to a comprehensible system of administration in the Protectorate. Instead they created for themselves the illusion of a series of recognisable totems through which indirect rule might be channelled, a fiction that sufficed when political relations were effectively non-committal but which revealed its shortcomings when officials were directed to actively manufacture influence within the target society.[49] Consequently it was becoming increasingly apparent that the practice of using isolated political officers in conjunction with effectively powerless tribal leaders for the purpose of reforming

Protectorate society was unlikely to deliver satisfactory results, regardless of numbers of political officers or aircraft in support.

The situation had been serious enough that by early 1940 Reilly (now in the employ of the Colonial Office) had proposed a radically different course of action; namely the implementation within the Protectorate of a form of district administration more commonly found in the African colonies. By dividing tribal lands into the equivalent of districts, each under the control of a civilian administrator and associated staff, administrators could better facilitate the organisation of political activity within the Protectorate and, in due course, the application of suitable economic improvements which would pay for such a radically enhanced administrative presence.[50] The proposal drew a thoroughly caustic response from Lake.[51] As for the Colonial Office, it acknowledged that although the District system might possibly comprise a feasible alternative to the methods then being used, the familiar bugbears of increased expenditure and responsibilities were enough to prevent the pursuit of such an ambitious course of action.[52]

This brief debate reflected the fundamental argument now on-going within the Aden political cadre. Should the Protectorate continue to be subject to a policy of activism, and potentially increased activism at that, or should it see a reversion to the pre-Reilly tradition of *laissez faire*? At the forefront stood Ingrams, having returned from the Hadramawt at the conclusion of his first stint as Resident Adviser there. As the one senior member of the Aden administration who possessed a broad background in Colonial service, and who had overseen the application of developmental reforms to Hadrami government and economic structures, he might have been expected to second Reilly's proposals and thus support the extension to the Protectorate of a broadly Colonial method. Instead he advocated precisely the opposite course of action; that

British policy in the Protectorate could not hope to function effectively until Aden had divorced its tribal hinterland completely from the ethos of Colonial administration.

Ingram's perspective was, perhaps somewhat oddly at first glance, encouraged by the success then being enjoyed in the Hadramawt. He put this down to the presence of a recognisable Hadrami political class with which to negotiate and Government-like structures with which to build upon, thereby providing a promising basis for diplomacy and the structural reform of Government and other items of state.[53] But as he saw it such beneficial conditions simply did not exist in the Protectorate, and in late 1941 he published a lengthy analysis of the failings of British policy there, proposing a series of measures that might lead to its rescue.[54]

Ingram's first concern was that the further spread of Colonial Office jurisdiction into the Protectorate, allied to the wider implementation of Colonial Service methods, would logically imply an expansion of colonial rule in S.W. Arabia; a politically unwise manoeuvre that might rouse nationalist sentiment throughout the region.[55] The problem was exacerbated by that fact that whereas the Hadramawt's functioning governments allowed British officials to act in a purely advisory capacity, thus adopting a properly subordinate role, the Protectorate offered no such assurances. It could not therefore be handled along colonial lines, regardless of whether it showed potential for economic improvement or not. For these reasons there had to be a restriction on the spread of the Colonial method across the region.

Ingrams then moved onto his second concern; namely the recruitment of a cadre of officers best suited to administering the Protectorate. He argued that by continuing to use the examples of Malaya, Hong-Kong, Cyprus, Africa, Palestine and Ceylon to advertise the merits of colonial service to potential recruits, the Colonial Office was fundamentally misrepresenting the nature of political employment in the Protectorate, rendering the term 'administration' largely meaningless to those most likely to be tasked

with its employment there. Recruitment had to be carried out with a completely different philosophy in mind.

He concluded his analysis with three observations; that colonial administration in the usual sense was inapplicable in the Aden Protectorate; that the best way of dealing with such a situation was a system of very loose political control - to all intents and purposes a return to *laissez faire* - and that the work of exercising this system was not the function of an administrative officer but a specialist *political* officer.[56] For Ingrams this final point was not merely a matter of semantics. He argued that existing Protectorate 'politicals' had begun to assume the role of ruler rather than spectator. Without adjustment in this respect he warned, the practice of Protectorate administration risked becoming a 'bed of Procrustes', resulting inevitably in a series of perverse political results.[57] Fully convinced that active interference in Protectorate affairs had the potential to draw the British Government into a situation it would not otherwise choose to entertain, Ingrams proposed two important measures; the embracing of tribal administrative techniques as practiced by the IPS, and a policy of following that Service's practice of recruiting specialists.[58] On this point he was adamant; if Arabs emphasized the virtues of independence and of a common desire not to be interfered with - tendencies which, he suggested, became more pronounced the more backward the Arab - then the logical conclusion in his eyes was a Protectorate administered by Arab specialists that foreswore pro-active interest for a policy of *laissez faire.*[59]

Whether Ingram's analysis on this point was coherent is an obvious point of contention, as will be shown. But even discounting such matters for the moment, what did the Colonial Office make of a fairly senior representative so emphatically decrying its own administrative methods? Particularly in the wider context of the appointment of Malcolm MacDonald as Secretary of State for Colonies in May 1938 and the subsequent announcement of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940, both of which

had promised a fundamental evolution in Britain's relationship with its Colonial territories.[60] MacDonald's tenure promised a genuinely progressive attitude, championing the notion that Britain's primary objective was the advancement of the best interests of colonial populations rather than their continued exploitation.[61] With such sentiments in mind, how could it now come to pass that representatives could legitimately suggest a course of action so contrary to proposed policy? Herein lay the crux of the matter. In truth the 1940 Act meant little for the Protectorate, or even Aden itself. The Protectorate 'states' lay outside the formal status of a Colony and this, in combination with their violent, poverty stricken and chaotic nature, ensured that they failed to share even in the relatively minimal development programmes that would eventually extended to Aden itself. In truth the Colonial Office, as a relative newcomer to the Middle East and with little institutional heritage in the region, was far more concerned with increasingly turbulent events at the time in Africa and the West Indies. Consequently the 'enlightened' thrust of the 1940 Act and the changes promised by MacDonald appeared in large part to bypass the hidden and rather parochial confines of S.W. Arabia. In fact there were indications that the region might be sacrificed in this respect for the benefit of more profitable endeavours elsewhere.[62]

Ingrams was therefore provided the latitude to speak his mind and, in the process, advance the notion that the Protectorate should remain free of any concerted attempt at socio-economic development.[63] Due to London's lack of interest his proposals for the effective reversion to a policy of *laissez faire* drew support from Hawthorn-Hall.[64] In his review of the arguments proposed, the latter supported the somewhat ironic notion that political officers should refrain from becoming politically active.[65] Indeed, he felt forced to reiterate this point in the face of what appeared to be an accelerating degree of interference on their part in what he termed 'Chiefly' matters.[66] Yet Hawthorn-Hall, and others, appeared oblivious to the most pertinent points of interest with regard to

Ingram's proposals. Namely that they were based upon a series of hugely questionable assumptions, and in themselves simply illustrated that senior officials were trying to forge policy on the move whilst operating in a fog of ignorance.

The most obvious concern should have been the centrality to Ingram's argument of Arab exceptionalism as a key tenet of Protectorate administration.[67] Aside from its weak intellectual foundations, by its very nature the proposal that Arabs were a race apart fundamentally contradicted the notion that the IPS's experience of administrating what were effectively Afghan tribes might act as a suitable paradigm for the Protectorate. In addition, the use of so called 'specialists' in such roles obscured the fact that in reality the knowledge possessed by such individuals was often thin, their time *in situ* frequently limited enough to prohibit any real advancement in this respect and even among those who developed a real 'feel' for their environment a genuine antipathy toward local tribes was not an uncommon feature.[68]

Indeed, Ingrams' desire to use the IPS as a suitable administrative model for the Protectorate asked serious question of his understanding of that organisation. First and foremost tribal affairs in the Protectorate were already being handled along 'Indian' lines. Although the IPS' stated principle of non-interference offered an enticing model for Ingrams, in reality that applied only to its interactions with India's Princely States, relations with which were managed according to established diplomatic conventions befitting their status as British dependencies. The tribal agencies of the North-West Frontier, on the other hand, were not only entirely autonomous but were also a hotbed of political activism. Indeed, senior IPS officials had long noted the overwhelming tendency for junior political officers to become actively involved in tribal affairs.[69] But these were realities that Ingram's observations from distance could not discern, his understanding of Frontier administration arriving second hand courtesy of the Indian Government's 1924 handbook for political officers.[70] And even if the IPS' stated policy

of non-interference were to be the *leitmotif* of the Protectorate political officer then it begged the obvious question; if it had previously been acknowledged by Reilly and the C.I.D. in 1934-'35 that a historic policy of non-interference had contributed to an insufferable state of affairs initially, then it was not unreasonable to suggest that a return to such a policy would simply result in continued chaos. It would certainly undermine the original rationale for the creation and employment of a political cadre and result in growing condemnation, nationally and internationally, for Britain's apparent lack of interest in the well being of the Protectorate's population.

Ingrams' proposals were revealing. They reflected a fundamental truth hidden within the architecture of Colonial administration in Arabia and the Indian Frontier; that the inherent complexities of those indigenous societies meant that understanding and skilled perception on the part of administrative officials was evident, but not necessarily a given. But more surprising perhaps they also revealed not only a lack of surefootedness in comprehending the true nature of administrative methods elsewhere in Empire, but also an apparent lack of understanding of what was actually occurring within the Protectorate itself. Decrying the efforts of junior political officers in their attempts to pacify the region, he had overlooked what were in fact significant - albeit highly localised - advances made in this respect.[71] And while he may have claimed that the best that could ever be hoped for was a state of affairs where there was, "[L]ess possibility of sudden death that at present", his criticisms failed to recognise the the most salient points; that British efforts were being undermined not by an irredeemably violent and obstinate society, or an unbalanced and unskilled political cadre, but by the lack of a properly workable framework for engagement and an institutional reluctance on the part of senior officials to fully establish British authority therein, thereby allowing the opportunity to fully address the problems faced.[72]

VI: Development

Ultimately, Ingrams theorizing came to nought. His desire to see tribal administration follow the Indian model was rendered moot by sudden changes in Southern Arabia's political and economic dynamics as the war progressed. These had begun in mid-1942 with his return to the Hadramawt in order to begin his second term as Resident Adviser, thus removing from the Aden Government a voluble and articulate opponent of any policy that sought to increase British engagement with the Protectorate.[73] He left behind him a political cadre that, after having been active among the tribes for some time now, was growing in confidence and chafing at the seemingly artificial restrictions placed upon its dealings within the Protectorate. That confidence was bolstered by the recrudescence of military capability - specifically aircraft – that after initial wartime shortages now provided the opportunity for a more robust presence. Despite Hawthorn-Hall's antipathy to their increasing tendency for politicking, there appeared evidence of an increased confidence with respect to the intricacies of local politics and a willingness to address violent feuds and disagreements.[74]

But the most significant impetus for change was the *deus ex machina* of natural disaster. The drought and subsequent harvest failure of 1943 that affected much of Southern Arabia hit the Protectorate hard.[75] With its population suffering dreadful hardship the British Government was forced to act. As the undisputed guardian of the region, now free of the complications and restrictions posed by Italian sensitivities or initial wartime emergencies, the Colonial Office was forced to acknowledge its responsibilities in a rapidly changing political and strategic climate, abandoning any policy of limited engagement in the face of a growing humanitarian crisis. Under pressure from London to alleviate the growing famine, Hathorn-Hall was instructed by the Colonial Office to shoulder aside traditional power brokers and grasp control of those limited areas of fertile land which had hitherto lain undeveloped and out of the reach of the local populace.[76] In June, the lower Yafai Sultan was forced to relinquish control of fertile

areas in Abyan as political staff, supported by Government Guards, instituted a land-distribution scheme involving local farmers and a system of rents and profit sharing with the Sultan that eventually responsible for the cultivation of some 5000 acres. It was the first of a series of initiatives that saw political officers supported by indigenous forces re-ordering local systems of Government and economy. A similar scheme was implemented the same month in Ahwar, in the lower Awlaqi Sultanate and in September 1943 some 50 Government guards were despatched to Bayhan, the site of intense feuding. Under the scrutiny of local political officers an embryonic system of government administration was established, with revenues being redirected via the appointed Chief throughout his domain, resulting in an upsurge of economic activity and the establishment of basic social services. The forward policy, ostensibly initiated a decade beforehand but which had floundered since then amid continual uncertainty as to what it really sought to achieve, had suddenly begun in earnest.

VII: **Conclusion**

The summer of 1943 was a watershed for the nature and direction of political administration in the Protectorate and firmly displaced the perception that it should remain an isolated enclave of regressive non-interference. Once the process of active involvement had begun, it proved both irresistible and permanent. The apparent success of the new 'advisory' treaties that regulated the relationship between British officials and native leaders in the Hadramawt now encouraged the Colonial Office to approve the establishment of similar systems in parts of the Protectorate. Within seven years the Fadhli and Lower Aulaqi Sultans, the Amir of Dhala, the Lower Yafa Sultan, the Wahidi Sultan of Balhaf, the Audhali Sultan, the Upper Aulaqi Sheikh and the Sultan of Lahej had entered advisory agreements with the British.[77] By elevating the relationship between political agents and 'states' from one of informal interference to one of reciprocal

diplomatic relations, the British began to stabilise political rule. By following the Hadramawt model, and referring matters of religion and custom to the state leaders while reserving for themselves responsibility for the establishment of state treasuries and the development of embryonic social services, the Resident Adviser system provided the Protectorate's political cadre with the necessary direction. Of course, the establishment of the Adviser system in the Protectorate may have benefited British officials searching for an appropriate framework to underpin political action but it asked questions of the impact of such methods on what had traditionally been a society used to more fluid notions of leadership. By formulating an official diplomatic relationship between rulers and advisers the former's political power was potentially more deeply but as a consequence more artificially rooted in tribal society. This would lead inevitably to eventual unrest on the part of elements of that society and encourage the mobilisation of military resources by the British to support their clients.[78] Although the events of 1943 had at least forced the British to finally bring the Protectorate 'in from the cold' as it were, to confront their dysfunctional system of administration there and to reward the population with some semblance of humanitarian intent, the establishment of more progressive methods could not disguise the fact that influence would continue to rest upon the healthy application of military force and invasive political manipulation.[79]

The advance of 1943-44 was instrumental in setting the conditions for the proper expansion of post-war British power into the Aden Protectorate. The actions taken laid the foundations for post-war policy; namely an increasing degree of political intervention in the affairs of those rulers with whom advisory treaties would be signed and the pushing of British influence even further into what had been, in the early 1930s, *terra incognita* even to those British officials most intimately connected with the region. The ultimate result would be the extension of British influence into swathes of Southern Arabia at a time when British commitments elsewhere in Empire were firmly in retreat.

The origins of that advance were confused, however, and its application even more so. Lacking any concerted objective beyond faint notions of societal reform, the initial penetration of Aden Colony's tribal hinterland - a forward policy by name, if not fully by nature - had been a largely directionless affair under Reilly's stewardship, reflecting a somewhat flawed understanding of Protectorate society, and a rather tenuous grasp of how the measures implemented might actually result in the objectives being sought. But its further evolution was even more troubled, revealing a genuine lack of consensus among those responsible for its direction. Even as senior members of the Colonial Office hierarchy espoused the requirement for a more enlightened policy toward colonial territories in general, and subordinates such as Reilly promoted the notion that the Protectorate should share in such initiatives, others, such as Hawthorn-Hall but most notably Ingrams, preferred a vision of political administration that differed little from that used a century beforehand. Neither side appeared either willing or able to resolve the dispute between themselves. Only Nature was able to provide the necessary stimulus for action in this respect.

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[1] Mawby, 'Britain's last Imperial Frontier: The Aden Protectorates 1952-59' *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 29/2, 75- 76.

[2] Mawby defines the former as a concerted policy of colonial development designed, within the framework of the Commonwealth, to aid the furtherance of British ambitions as a 'third influence' in world politics, and the latter as a form of maintaining influence by handing over power to successor governments operating effectively under western tutelage and thereby protecting British interests.

[3] A situation inspired by fears over Yemeni irredentism, Pan-Arabism and concerns regarding Britain's position in the Middle East.

[4] For more on this later era see Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates 1955-1967* passim.

[5] The so-called 'WAP' and 'EAP'. For the purposes of this article, the pre-1940 administrative terms will be used. The 'Protectorate' will refer to the tribal lands surrounding Aden colony and which extended northward to the Yemen and eastward to the Hadramawt, which in 1940 would be that portion of territory re-designated the Eastern Aden Protectorate (See Fig 1). For clarity, the term Hadramawt will be used throughout.

[6] *Mawby* 131-155

[7] The tribes were the Abdali, Fadli, Awlaqi, Yafii, Hawshabi, Amiri, Alawi, Aqrabi and Subayhi. They were not all essential to the defence of Aden but the broader political entity that they formed, i.e. the Protectorate, was. For more detail on these initial treaty arrangements see Lakon, *Britain and the Hadramawt* (Yemen), 78-80

[8] The Hadramawt comprised the Quai'ty sultanate of Shihr and Mukulla, the Kathiri state of Seiyun, the Wahidi sultanates of Balhaf and Bir Ali and the Mahra sultanate of Quishn and Socotra. However, the initial British 'political' concept of the Hadramawt was restricted to the extent of Quai'ti-Kathiri territory. See TNA [The National Archives, Kew, London] Colonial Office Series [CO] 935 [Confidential Print Middle East] 19 Aden Colony and Protectorate Correspondence, Mukulla Intelligence Summaries no 78263/37 [No2] Memorandum on Hadramawt Affairs December 1936 – April 1937 by Mr W. H. Ingrams 1st September 1937.

[9] For a detailed background to the Government of Bombay's relations with Hadramawt polities during this period, see Lakon 254-257

[10] The first agreement was signed in 1882 when the Kasadi, a rival dynasty based in Mukulla, sought Ottoman help in their conflict against the Quai'ty. The Government of Bombay forced the Kasadi to surrender territory to the Quai'ity'sbut in return Britain gained effective control over Quai'ity foreign relations. See Lakon 79.

[11] Although the Protectorate passed to Colonial Office control in 1921, Aden itself remained under the authority of the Government of India until 1937, whereupon it was absorbed into the Colonial Office portfolio.

[12] For a detailed examination of the way in which the Aden Resident managed relations with the hinterland during the late 19th and early 29th centuries, see Gavin, *Aden Under British Rule 1839-1967* 210-275

[13] Gavin states that the shape of the Protectorate, in the sense of the tribal lands that comprised it, was essentially dictated not by rational discernment on the part of British policymakers but the historic influence of the Lahej Sultan upon the Aden Residency. See *Aden Under British Rule* 142.

[14] The British presence in the remainder of the protectorate comprised a single RAF intelligence officer, Sqn Ldr Aubrey Rickards.

[15] TNA CO 935/10 Resident to the Sec of State 21st November 1934 No 305 confidential memorandum: 'Relations with the Yemen'.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.* The term 'Chiefs' is used to signify those Shiekhs or Sultans who theoretically or otherwise, ruled over particular tribal territories within the Protectorate.

[18] For an in-depth examination of the different strata of Protectorate society see Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen* and Boxberger, *On the Edge of Empire*. An interesting contemporaneous study of the tribesmen class can be found in Hamilton's 'The Social Organization of the Tribes of the Aden Protectorate' *passim.* The British viewed the tribesmen as essentially partners in tribal rule. TNA CO 725 [Aden original correspondence] 75/1 No 78481/40 No 10 Memorandum on Policy in the Aden Protectorate 2nd January 1941.

[19] For more on India's historic dealings in the region see Onley, 'The Raj Reconsidered: India's Informal Empire and Spheres of Influence in Asia and Africa' *Asian Affairs* 44-62, and Balfour Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East*. The latter examines the Indian Government's creation of the Trucial states of Oman, a series of agreements that would provide a model in some respects for Ingram's later dealings in the Hadramawt.

[20] For more on the Indian residency system see M. H. Fisher: 'Indirect Rule in the British Empire: The foundations of the Residency System in India (1764-1858*)', Modern Asian Studies*, 18/3 (1984) 393-428 and John M. Willis, 'Making Yemen Indian' *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 41, 22-38.

[21] This article shall use the term 'political' to refer those responsible for diplomatic dealings with leaders and populations of independent territories within the Anglo-Indian sphere of influence in Southern Arabia. The breadth of that influence is again reinforced by Onley and Willis.

[22] The latter was keen to resolve the long-standing frontier dispute with Yemen over the delimitation of the Protectorate, a dispute which had involved a concerted period of air action in 1928.

[23] See Belhaven, *The Uneven Road*, 111.

[24] Throughout the late 1920's and early 1930's the Aden administration had been forced to mount numerous bombing operations against Yemeni forces occupying Protectorate territory, at significant expense. Reilly suggested that the equipping of five major tribes with retinues of armed guards would cost no more than £500. See TNA CO 935/10 Resident to Secretary of State 21st November 1934 No 305 Confidential

[25] The initial choice had been Squadron Leader Rickards of RAF intelligence who, along with Lake, was the only British officer with any real knowledge of the Protectorate. See Belhaven *The Uneven Road*, 79

[26] TNA CO/935/19 78278/37 No1 'Internal Security Organization' Reilly to Secretary of State for the Colonies 18th October 1937.

[27] The Northwest Frontier would see a plethora of indigenous units formed, all of which were created by and operated under the auspices of the Indian Political Service (and its predecessor, the Foreign and Political Department).

[28] TNA CO 935/14 78018/35 (No.1) Resident to the Secretary of State 17 April 1935 'Policy in the Hadramawt' enclosure no 72

[29] Ingrams Colonial service by that point had included periods in both Zanzibar and Mauritius respectively. See *Arabia and the Isles*, 12-84

[30] See Freitag *Indian Ocean Migrants*, 380 and Lakon, *Britain and the Hadramawt,* 212

[31] For more on Italian policy in the Middle East during this period see Massimiliano Fiore *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East 1922-40*

[32] The Foreign Office had, since 1925, perceived a growing and rather unnerving Italian interest in the Yemen, stimulated mainly by the potential presence of oil in the nearby Farsan Islands. See TNA E250/176/91 FO (Foreign Office series) 371 [Political Departments general correspondence] 10818 No 16858/25 Colonial Office to FO in response to telegram from Resident at Aden, 15 April 1925.

[33] The diplomatic agreement had been arrived at during the Talks of Rome, February 1927, during which Britain declared its strategic interests in the region, but acknowledged Italian economic interests. Tellingly, at the conclusion of negotiations both sides had agreed that neither possessed political ambitions in Southern Arabia, a statement that Britain was abrogating by virtue of its proposed move into the Hadramawt. See TNA E376/22/91 FO 371 12235 No 8 Confidential Sir Austen Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to Sir Gilbert Clayton, assistant to Ambassador Sir Ronald Graham, (Rome) 27 January 1927.

[34] TNA CO 935/14 Relations with the Aden Protectorate 1934-36 Committee of Imperial Defence standing official sub-committee for questions concerning the Middle East: 78018/1/35 No 1 Secret 21st August 1935

[35] *Ibid*

[36] As Leo Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies quipped in 1927, "[E]ach governor and each service is…adapted to local conditions, instinctive of its understanding of those conditions and in its sympathy with the population it administers". See Anthony Kirk-Greene, *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial and Overseas Civil Services 1837-1997*, 38

[37] See Simon C. Smith, *British Relations with Malay Rulers from Decentralization to Malayan independence 1930-1957* 4-16

[38] A similar agreement reached soon afterwards with Kathir. For more on these events see G. -Smith 'Ingrams' Peace, Hadramawt 1937-40', 18.

[39] Advisory treaties were signed with the Sultan of Mukulla on 13 August 1937, and subsequently with the Kathiri Sultan on 2nd March 1939. It should be acknowledged that there had been multiple attempts by the both sides in the Kathir-Quai'yt civil war to engineer peace prior to Ingrams interjection. These reinforce Freitag's suggestion that Ingram's undoubted influence in proceedings should not obscure the fact that he was but one part in a wider scheme directed toward peace and reconciliation. See Freitag, 380.

[40] There was an acknowledgement that some progress had been made in Abiyan and Subeihi areas, where the involvement of political officers in resolving water disputes had resulted in the cultivation of significant tracts of land and led to a reduction in violence. See TNA CO 725/75/1 78481/40 No 10 Memorandum on Policy in the Aden Protectorate Jan 2nd 1941. But in general terms the Protectorate was viewed as remaining inherently violent and unstable.

[41] TNA FO 371/31316 Sir John Hawthorn-Hall, Governor of Aden, to Lord Moyne, Secretary of State for Colonies 12th September 1941.

[42] For a deeper examination of the morality of the use of airpower as a form of control see Priya Satia 'The Defence of Inhumanity; Air Control and the British Idea of Arabia' *American Historical Review* 111/1 16-51. She does not examine RAF operations in the Protectorate, however. With regard to S.W. Arabia see David Omissi *Airpower and Colonial Control: The Royal Air Force 1919-1939* 50-52.

[43] Although aircraft supported military operations on the North-West Frontier, there was no doubt that political officers saw their primary value as an intelligence gathering resource. See Tripodi, *Edge of Empire; The British Political Officer and Tribal Administration on the North-West Frontier 1877-1947* 182-5

[44] Particularly the aforementioned Squadron Leader Aubrey Rickards, who was regarded as a font of knowledge on the subject of the Protectorate tribes.

[45] Ingrams, *Arabia and the Isles* 267-9

[46] Charles Sheppard would later assume Ingram's position as Resident Adviser at Mukulla 1945-9. Lake had been appointed Chief Secretary within the Aden administration, the principal advisor on all matters relating to protectorate tribal affairs.

[47] MEC [Middle East Centre, St Anthony's College, Oxford] Archives Collection GB 165-0156, Private papers of Sir Harold Ingrams VI/4, Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, extract from 'Reflections on Policy in South West Arabia' by Sir Harold Ingrams, 23 December 1941.

[48] See Balfour-Paul *The end of Empire in the Middle East* , 55

[49] This is not to say that British officials were incompetent. In many respects the British were, over time, able to develop what appears to be an accurate understanding of Protectorate society, one that accorded with many of the later studies by social anthropologists such Boxberger. See Hamilton, *The Social Organisation of the Tribes of the Protectorate*, 240-241

[50] African and Oriental collection, British Library [BL] London, IOR [India Office Records] R/20 [Records of the Aden administration 1837-1967] C 204 Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir Bernard Reilly, Governor of Aden, 22nd February 1940

[51] Lake was at pains to point out the futility of using a district system when tribes overflowed district boundaries. Administration in such a context could only be pursued along tribal lines, he argued. See BL IOR/R/20/C 204 Tribal Guards General memorandum from Chief Secretary subject 'Districts in the Western Protectorate' 4th February 1940.

[52] BL IOR/R/20/C 204 Malcolm MacDonald, Secretary of State for Colonies to Sir Bernard Reilly, Governor of Aden, 22nd February 1940

[53] The impact of British led reforms was significant. In 1934 the Mukulla Government consisted of four officials and some a small number of schoolteachers. By 1944 it consisted of a State Council overseeing the activities of some 20 separate departments under the general control of a State Secretary. 18 other Hadrami Arabs and Indians assumed administrative, medical and military positions. State revenue had increased by a factor of over 20, from Rs 630,000 to Rs 15,000,000. See Harold Ingrams 'Political Developments in the Hadramawt' *International Affairs* 21/2 238-239. For more information on Ingrams' visit to the Far East in the summer of 1939 see BL IOR/R/20/C/252 File 1066 Report on Tour to Malaya, Java and Hyderabad by H. Ingrams 20th April 1940

[54] 'Reflections on Policy in South West Arabia' 23 December 1941. MEC [Middle East Centre, St Anthony's College, Oxford] Archives Collection GB 165-0156, Private papers of Sir Harold Ingrams VI/4

[55] *Ibid*

[56] Private papers of Sir Harold Ingrams, St Anthony's College Oxford. MEC GB/165-0156 Box 6/4 Memorandum concerning the Recruitment of Political officers 9th Oct 1941. See also Ingrams, *Arabia and the Isles*, 382-3.

[57] MEC GB/165-0156 Private papers of Sir Harold Ingrams, St Anthony's College Oxford. Box 6/4 Memorandum concerning the Recruitment of Political officers 9th Oct 1941. Procrustes referred to the Greek mythological highwayman who would stretch or mutilate passers-by to fit an iron bed, thus forcing them to accommodate an arbitrary standard without reference to their own differences in this respect.

[58] MEC GB 165-0156 6/4, Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, extract from 'Reflections on Policy in South West Arabia' by Sir Harold Ingrams, 23 December 1941.

[59] Indeed, so convinced was Ingrams of the need for a subordinate posture that when posted as Resident Advisor to the Hadramawt he quickly reduced from eight to two the number of British officers employed in advisory capacities , replacing them where possible with Hadramis, Transjordanians and even Punjabis. See Ingrams 'Political Developments in the Hadramawt' *International Affairs* 21/2, 238-239

[60] For more on the 1929 Act see 'Colonial Development and Welfare, 1929-1957: The Evolution of a Policy' E. R. Wicker *Social and Economic Studies* 7/4, 178

[61] *Ibid*, 180

[62] Ingrams suggested that spending on S.W. Arabia might in fact be reduced. See MEC GB/165-0156 6/4 Memorandum concerning the Recruitment of Political officers 9th Oct 1941

[63] Ingrams did propose that where possible, resources be diverted toward the provision of educational, medical and agricultural services but with the unworkable proviso that at least half of the required revenue come from those benefitting from such services. Hawthorn-Hall considered the proposal entirely unfeasible in a practical sense in light of the inherent poverty of the region. See MEC GB/165-0156 6/4 Hawthorn-Hall to Lord Moyne, 23rd December 1941

[64] He also found support from his fellow political officer Stuart Perowne, who cautioned that any attempt at westernization or direct administration would 'lay up trouble for our successors'. See TNA CO 725/75/1 Perowne to Lake 27th January 1941

[65] MEC GB/165-0156 6/4 Extracts from Minutes of a meeting of the Protectorate Affairs Council, Aden Secretariat 28th July 1941.

[66] *Ibid.* This had culminated in the deposition in mid-1941 of the Fahdli Sultan for effective 'misrule' of his territory, an act facilitated by Lake's *de facto* control of political affairs.

[67] For a fuller examination of Ingrams' adherence to the concept of Arab exceptionalism see MEC GB 165-0156 6/4, Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, extract from 'Reflections on Policy in South West Arabia' by Sir Harold Ingrams, 23 December 1941

[68] Tripodi, 210

[69] For criticism of the political cadre operating on the North-West Frontier one can refer to the comments of Leslie Mallam, Political Agent for Malakand agency, who in a debate over post-war frontier policy would launch a coruscating attack upon the competencies of his fellow political officers. See BL IOR L/PS/12 [Political and Secret Department external correspondence] 3278 Note by Colonel Mallam on the case for Tribal Self Government 26 July 1945.

[70] Ingrams proposals for a new *Corps d'elite* contained extracts from 'Manual of Instructions to officers of the Political Department of India 1924'. However, as stated above, no such written instructions existed for those officers engaged in tribal administration.

[71] It should be borne in mind that political officers on the Indian frontier had, by 1942, had nearly half a century in which to refine their methods, compared to the seven years or so for their Arabian counterparts operating in the Protectorate.

[72] For Ingrams quote see his 'Reflections on Policy in South West Arabia' 23 December 1941

[73] Ingrams would remain in Mukulla until 1945, after which he was appointed as assistant secretary to the Allied Control Commission for Germany (1945-7) and then as Chief Commander of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast (1947-8). Further appointments in Gibraltar, Hong-Kong and Uganda preceded his retirement in 1968.

[74] Gavin *Aden Under British Rule*, 309

[75] *Ibid,* 308. The drought of 1943-44 only compounded the damage done to traditional sources of income for the Hadramawt in particular, as remittances of up to £600,000 per annum which were traditionally derived from Hadrami's living and working in Malaysia and Singapore had been lost due to the loss of those territories to Japanese occupation since late 1941 and early 1942.

[76] Gavin *Aden Under British Rule*, 312

[77] Simon C. Smith, 'Rulers and Residents', 516

[78] *Ibid*, 516-520. See also Muhammed Sai'id al-Qaddal and Abdulaziz Ali bin Salah al-Qu'aiti, *Sultan Abdul Aziz bin Ali bin Saleh Al-Quai'ti 1898-1948*: *Half A Century of Political Struggle in the Hadramawt* 180-194.

[79] Mawby, 'Britain's last Imperial Frontier: The Aden Protectorates 1952-59' *passim.*